

## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY AND CHURCH GROWTH

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines leadership competency and church growth. A survey study of 25 randomly selected churches in Port Harcourt Rivers State was carried out. The population was 125 leaders of the churches, but only 96% (120 leaders) were used as sample. The data was analyzed with Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient statistical tool. The findings revealed that leadership competency is related to church growth. It was thus concluded that leadership competency enhances church growth by increasing the spiritual and numeric growth.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Leadership Competency; Church Growth; Intrapersonal Competency; Relational Competency & Professional Competency*

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### INTRODUCTION

A healthy church is a growing church. According to Macchia (2017), a healthy church has empowering presence of God, spiritual disciplines, God's exalting worship, commitment to loving and caring for the community, enhance servant-leadership development, have an outward focus, accountability, network relationship with churches, and engage in stewardship and kindness to people. The growth of a church requires God's word, His presence and competent pastors and leaders.

Job role in an organization requires specific competencies in their execution; given such roles to an incompetent hand can affect the church. Absolute care must be exercised to confirm that leaders are capable and competent in handling their specific roles. For every work in an organization, there are core and general competencies required in executing the task.

Leadership competencies refer to the pastoral and other leaders' personal attributes, proficiency, knowledge, aptitudes, skills, values and wisdom in handling their appointed roles or activities. A church leader must be someone who accepts Jesus Christ and has a relationship with Him; someone knowledgeable in the word, spirit filled, dedicated and can bear fruits in the ministry.

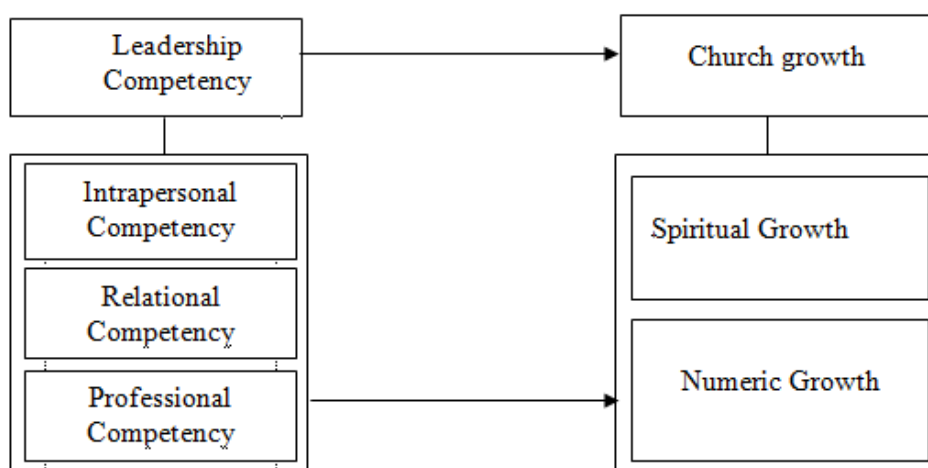
The core competencies are the entry level competencies, as stated by the organization regardless of role. Some general competencies required are good communication ability, community development, an educated person with character and personality, good in winning soul, a person with leadership ability, possessed pastoral care, diligent in worship, preaching, carrying out administration task and organization. A leader who inspires and motivates followers to be fully committed to ministerial task must use core and general competency intelligently to enhance church growth.

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Succeeding requires making satisfactory progress towards God's given assignment. When an incompetent leader is ordained to lead the flocks, both spiritual and numerical growth is at risk. Every church has a vision. When the vision is not clearly communicated to the followers, the church and the follower's growth are hindered, frustration is set in as purpose behind programs and activities are not known, causing derailment in vision and goals achievement.

Although having a full congregation in the service do not always indicate growth and transformation is taking place. It takes competency of leaders to win souls and make transformation in the heart of people. When impact of competency is not felt, and the followers cannot meet their spiritual and physical needs, the tendency to look for another place of worship where they can meet their needs occurs. Leaders who are not spiritually, mentally and emotionally present in their work always have problems of incompetency. Avoiding the occurrence of this motivates research in a leader's competency and church growth. The study examines the association between leadership competency and church growth.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Leadership, Competency and Church Growth.**

The variables are Leadership Competency (the independent variable) Church Growth (the dependent variable) and their dimensions are laid out in figure 1. From the framework, the dimensions used are intrapersonal competency, relational competency and professional competency. For those of church growth, the frame shows two measures: spiritual and numeric growth.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDY

How does:

- Intrapersonal competency relates to church growth?
- Relational competency relates to church growth?
- Professional competency relates to church growth.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS FOR THE STUDY

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Intrapersonal competency does not relate to church growth.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Relational competency does not relate to church growth.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Professional competency does not relate to church growth.

## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

This is the act of motivating, inspiring and guiding followers, taking sound and difficult decisions and producing a clear vision (Rouse, 2017). Leaders are individuals who have been mentored, educated and ordained for ministerial tasks. They have the responsibility of winning soul. They comprise the pastors and leaders who direct and guide the path of their followers for a common goal. “The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things” (Reagan, 2011). Their achievements are the impacts they made on their followers.

Competency is the clear and quantifiable knowledge, skills and personal qualities that improved employee performance (Nebraska University). Pastoral competencies refer to visible and quantifiable skills, knowledge, capabilities and personal traits that add value to facilitate productivity in ministerial performance. Competencies should not just serve as a yardstick to measure, rather it should serve as a blueprint, a road map to direct them to elevate their ministerial performance.

Every leader claimed to be competent. To be competent, there are core competencies and general competency. Core competencies are the important features that distinguish an individual or firm from its competitors (Twin 2019). Pastoral or leader’s core competencies are requirement needed for ministerial appointments. In this study, core competencies will be classified into two; divine and ministerial competencies. The divine competency is salvation from sin, sanctification and spirit baptism. These are the pillars and the divine competency upon which growth of any church must be built. The ministerial competency is the professional competency needed for executing a task. The success of the church is in God’s hands, but every leader has to be faithful, hardworking and competent stewards to be successful.

## INTRAPERSONAL COMPETENCY

These are foundation and fundamental competency qualities required from a service leader (Shek & Lin, 2015). For a leader to effectively serve the people, there are some intrapersonal competencies that are required from the leader. This can be found in I Tim 3:1-7

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he falls into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he falls into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The qualities listed in I Tim, 1: 7, are biblical features of a minister to be ordained. The intrapersonal competency of the leaders gives the leaders confidence to be a good example to others, and can motivate and inspire others. The followers have a lot to learn from their leaders. They admire and respect their leaders for the extraordinary qualities they possess. Meeting these qualities are difficult as humans, but the Holy Spirit directs our lives to meet these criteria and

sustains it. Composure, organization, maturity, patience, education, trustfulness, eloquence, unbiased attitude, caring and total submission to God must reflect as intrapersonal competency.

## RELATIONAL COMPETENCY

Relational competence refers to the set of personalities that enhance easy interaction among people. (L'Abate, Cusinato, Maino, Colesso, & Scilletta (2019). As individuals interact daily, nothing can be achieved without good relational competency. Good relationship is the root of all undertakings; you cannot care for a lost soul if your relational competency is questioned. Rainer (2016) outlines seven church relational competencies in his study. Using this will assist many leaders to build their relationships with the followers. They are:

- Have an exciting prayer life:
- Care and visit others:
- They rarely speak about themselves
- They are well planned, focused.
- They accept their inadequacies.
- They undertake persecution without being defensive.
- Accept criticism.

## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

Professional competencies are attributes that are cherished by the expert, establishments and professional bodies connected to the career. Leaders require certain professional competency that meets the standards and moral ethics of their work. A leader must possess good reasoning ability, know the job tasks and expectations. The ministerial competency for church growth can be extracted from the acronym 'Core'.

C - Called, Convinced and Compassionate.

O - Ordination and Organization

R - Readiness

E - Education

When a leader is convinced of his call, God will lay compassion and burden of people into the heart; thus meeting God's requirements to be called the "sons of God". A leader must be ordained into office for organization, acquire proper education and must be mentored by a superior on how to interpret the God's word and passionate with evangelism, by converting the lost souls. Act 13:2–3 states:

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit stated, "set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So, after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

The bible is the standard of church growth, just as Barnabas and Saul were ordained for ministerial duties, so is every child of God, they must be ordained for leadership positions in the church.

The pastor must be ready to pay the price needed for church growth, such as readiness to pray, worship, study the scripture and biblical materials that enhance self-development, face trials, persecutions and obstacles with a strong

determination to succeed. Ministers must be well educated, for effective communication, creativity, proactiveness, enlightenment, good reasoning ability and transformation of people's lives. 2Timothy 2:15 (NIV) states:

Do your best to present yourself to God, as one approved, a workman who need to be ashamed, and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Knowledge exposed the people of God to biblical truth. A leader must know God's word, be humble, careful with evil devices and continuously acquire knowledge of the truth. Some general competencies for ministry regarding the pastoral position centers on community development and collaboration, evangelism, leadership, organization, administration, prayer, worship and education. The Bible outlines both the core and general qualities or characteristics of the leader.

## **CHURCH GROWTH**

The assumption that prayer and manifestation of miracles are the only attributes for growth is not true. Church growth has principles. Spiritual, physical, mental, social, material and academic knowledge must be put in place. The church must be purpose driven, strategic and plan oriented for growth to occur. As God uses people in different ways, the church's unique qualities and gifts should be used for mission work for effective church growth. A growing church requires holiness and love (having spiritual growth), must have personal growth, numeric growth, technological growth and economic growth. The study will be limited to spiritual and numeric growth.

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

Spiritual growth is being matured, growing in knowledge, skills, wisdom, trust, faith and grace. Spiritual requires constant enrichment and relationship with God through meditating and listening to the word of God and fervent prayer. Galatians 5: 22–23 states:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there are no laws. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

The above fruits are the qualities to evaluate spiritual growth, staying away from flesh, desires and passions make Christ dwell in us.

## **NUMERIC GROWTH**

Numeric growth is the increase in the numbers of followers. Numeric growth can be achieved through evangelizing and nurturing the converted to souls. Although numbers are not always the yardstick of success, the church of God is for everyone; a home where all sins are cleaned as snow. The absence of numeric growth in the name of purity reflects an absence of a revival, lack of boldness in witness and an excuse for disregarding evangelism.

## **LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY AND CHURCH GROWTH**

Competent leaders are needed to put in place the strategic plan to overcome ministerial challenges, exhibit humility by commanding respect from the followers, be a transformer, a revivalist and a winner of souls. The leader must be a teacher, who makes the congregation know the importance of Mathew 6: 33. "But seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."

The mandate from God is to seek first the kingdom of God. And other things needed shall be added. Papa Ibiyeomie has declared in salvation ministries in Nigeria that every believer must go on soul winning to ensure that others enjoy the privileges and benefit of Mathew 6:33. Every member was encouraged to win souls, practicing this act has changed the congregation's lives. Many have testified to the miraculous success, blessings and changes in their lives as they win souls for Christ. The church has tremendously improved members' spiritual growth and enjoys numeric growth through preaching, nurturing, and follow up of the new converts

People go through different challenges and difficult yoke. Matthew 6: 33, gives us the courage to know that the only solution to all problems is having Christ, once this is established, God does not forsake his children. Acceptance of the word enables new converts to have encounter with God by worshiping in a living Church and serving God fervently.

The general competency possessed by the leaders must be continually improved, constant worship, study and prayers are the tools for the increase in wisdom and competency, as the flesh becomes dead to sin. His presence makes impossible possible. Revival, impacts, unlimited joy and strength from God transformed believers.

### Methodology

The study conducted a survey of 25 randomly selected churches in Port Harcourt. Questionnaires were used and rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Pearson Product = Moment Correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data with the aid of SPSS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

125 questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample, but only 96% was retrieved and analyzed. 120 questionnaires returned were analyzed.

### Presentation and Analysis of Data on Leaders' Competency and Church Growth

**H<sub>01</sub>: Intrapersonal competency does not relate to church growth.**

#### Correlations of Intrapersonal Competency and Church growth

**Table 1: Intrapersonal Competency and Church Growth**

		Intrapersonal Competency	Church Growth
Intrapersonal Competency	Pearson Correlation	1	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.698**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2019.

Table 1 reveals a calculated p-value of 0.000, which is lesser than the significant level of 0.05. ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Intrapersonal Competency shows a high positive correlation value of .698\*\*. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and uphold that:

Intrapersonal competency has a significant relationship with Church Growth.

**H<sub>02</sub>: Relational competency does not relate to church growth.**

#### Correlations of Relational Competency and Church Growth

**Table 2: Relational Competency and Church Growth**

		Relational Competency	Church Growth
Relational Competency	Pearson Correlation	1	.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	120	120
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.576**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	120	120

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2019.

Table 2 above shows a calculated p-value of 0.002, which is lesser than the significant level of 0.05. ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and uphold that:

Relational Competency has a significant relationship with Church Growth.

**H<sub>03</sub>: Professional competency does not relate to church growth.**

#### Correlations of Professional Competency and Church Growth

**Table 3: Professional Competency and Church Growth**

		Professional Competency	Church Growth
Professional Competency	Pearson Correlation	1	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Church Growth	Pearson Correlation	.626**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2019.

Table 3 shows a calculated p-value of 0.000, which is lesser than the significant level of 0.05. ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and uphold that:

Professional Competency has a significant relationship with Church Growth.

#### Relationship between Leadership Competency and Growth

**Table 4: Leadership Competency and Church Growth**

		Leadership Competency	Church Growth
Leadership Competency	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Church Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.633**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2019

Table 4 illustrates the association between the independent and the dependent variables. It depicts a strong association between Leadership Competency and Church Growth. The p-value was less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), with a positive correlation value 0.633\*\*, showing a high positive correlation between the variables.

**Table 5: Summary of Test Hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Significance	Decision
Ho <sub>1</sub> : Intrapersonal competency does not relate to church growth.	Significant	Reject
Ho <sub>2</sub> : Relational competency does not relate to church growth.	Significant	Reject
Ho <sub>3</sub> : Professional competency does not relate to church growth.	Significant	Reject

The test hypotheses revealed that all the hypotheses were rejected, as there was a significant relationship between the variables.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study examined leadership competency and influence on church growth. The bivariate analysis in this study showed that the Leadership Competency and Church Growth are significantly related, as the variables analyzed depict that. Leadership competency enhances church growth. The church can improve church growth through the leaders' intrapersonal, relational and professional competency. When the leaders possess intrapersonal, relational and professional competency, it promotes spiritual and numeric growth.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The leaders should build a relational competency that inspires unity among the children of God.
- Acquiring professional competency should be continuous for preaching the truth.
- The church's professional competency should meet the standards and moral ethics of their work.
- The intrapersonal competency should meet the requirements listed in I Timothy 1: 7.
- Leadership competency should be encouraged for successful growth.

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